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This is one of the best conceived and executed anthologies to be published during this golden age of the scholarly anthology. Nicely bookended by a foreword and afterword written by Kenneth Noe and Dan Sutherland, respectively, ambitiously but clearly introduced by the editors, and comprising valuable essays (mainly by junior scholars) that each cover a distinct facet of the topic, it is a model of the genre. According to McKnight and Myers, the volume seeks to define the emerging field of "guerrilla studies" by making the following points: there were many different guerrilla wars, Lost Cause mythology deliberately buried this complex story to fabricate a memory of admirable Confederate valor and unity, the Confederacy failed to get a handle on the irregular warfare raging within its lines that ultimately helped to defeat it, and military historians of the war have generally ignored untraditional modes of combat. The "resistance by scholars of the conventional battlefield" as well as the National Park Service to accept the importance of the "guerrilla battlefield" ignores the fact that "far more people were affected directly by guerrilla conflict between 1861 and 1865 than fought for three days in July 1863 on those Pennsylvania fields or over the besieged Mississippi town" (5).

Each of the fifteen essays makes a discreet and significant contribution to the agenda the editors set out. Among the pieces that stand out for their originality are Matthew M. Stith's essay on the importance of the environment and the terrain on guerrilla warfare, Andrew Fialka's quantitative and special analysis of Gen. Thomas Ewing's brutal but practical quashing of guerrillas in western Missouri, Joseph M. Beilein Jr.'s exploration of the intersection of Missouri's drinking culture with guerilla **[End Page 304]** culture, and Laura June Davis's essay on the irregular riverine warfare fought by Mississippi boat-burners. But the quality of research and strength of argument of all of the essays are far less variable than in most anthologies.

McKnight and Myers make a strong case for the importance of this mode of warfare to the military, social, and cultural histories of the Civil War. Yet the tone of the introduction and a few of the essays is a little defensive, in that they insist that "guerrilla studies" should be considered on the same terms as the grand battles and major campaigns of the war. This seems to narrow the field rather than raise its profile. The term "guerrilla" becomes less useful the deeper one gets into the book. Not all of the essays are about guerrillas, as such, and many are about regular troops that adopt irregular tactics, Union commanders who choose to conduct a "hard war" to put down the guerrillas, disaffection and disloyalty, gender, or any number of other topics. "Guerrilla" warfare—and the "guerrillas" who fought it—is really a subcategory of the war experience better (and often in this volume) described as "irregular."

In fact, at least a dozen of the essays in *The Guerrilla Hunters* show that irregular warfare is best understood within its sociocultural contexts rather than simply as military operations. Guerrillas were a constant source of distress and anger to the governments and military commanders of both sides, many individuals and families suffered greatly because of the guerrilla war, and the irregular war did represent *the war* to many who endured it. It was an incredibly important part of the Civil War experience, but it does not have to be made an equivalent to the big battles.

Earl Hess says as much in the book's last essay: "Despite the claims of recent historians that irregular warfare occupied center stage and even played a decisive role in shaping the Civil War, no one on the Federal side saw it that way" (341). Perhaps fifty thousand men served as guerrillas, and although they cut a wide swath through the divided South, that hardly matches the millions who served in the U.S. and Confederate armies. But it is no small thing to realize, as Hess argues, that irregulars "destabilized Southern society, inflicted terrible suffering on friend and foe alike, and opened the door for many people to satisfy personal grudges with neighbors" (343). That most southerners sought to remove guerrillas from the collective memory of the Civil War attests to their capacity to disrupt wartime society and influence postwar politics and culture. *The Guerrilla Hunters* is a profoundly useful collection of case studies that help articulate this complicated understanding of the Civil War. **[End Page 305]**